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REFORMING INTELLIGENCE: SELLING CHANGE

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REFORMING INTELLIGENCE: SELLING CHANGE

The Intelligence Community (IC) is composed of 13 intelligence agencies, including those in the Department of Defense, Justice, Treasury, Energy, State and the Central Intelligence Agency.[1] The IC provides foreign intelligence information and specialized support to U.S. policy makers. In May 2001, President George W. Bush established a commission, led by Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, United States Air Force retired, to study the IC and make recommendations to reorganize and enhanced the performance of the community. The commission's study presumably will focus on the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the national intelligence agencies (NSA, NRO and NIMA) that are a part of the Defense Department.

The IC, whose foundation was established in 1947, is a creature of crises. It was developed out of the ashes of crises, namely World War II, and continues to be defined by crises. As a result, there have been many attempts to reform the intelligence community, the role of the DCI, and the role of the Defense Department. For the most part, these attempts have failed, or the reforms were narrowed in scope from what was originally intended. One exception to this was the increased Congressional oversight of the entire intelligence community and the establishment of committees in both the Senate and House to monitor the intelligence community.

Certainly, there are powerful obstacles to radical intelligence reorganization. The IC itself, supported by key players in the Executive Branch, particularly the President and the Secretary of Defense, is one.[2] Within Congress, the armed services committees have also become roadblocks

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[1] Office of Public Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency. *A Consumer's Guide to Intelligence,pg vii*

[2] Richelson, Jeffrey T. *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, Westview Press, 1999, pg 454

to reform, protecting the military's role in intelligence. Sometimes intelligence reform did not occur because some of the recommended changes were bad ideas that would only add fuel to problems within the IC.

Retired Lieutenant Gen Scowcroft, the current head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and the commission, is supposed to brief the President shortly on the commission's recommendations. In light of the tragedy on September 11 2001, there has been much speculation that the commission will seek to strengthen the role of the DCI. Additionally, the national assets, currently subordinated to the Defense Department, may be placed under DCI control. The opening salvos have already been fired to derail, delay or discredit the commission's recommendations. Leaks to the Washington Post and other newspapers, and the Defense Department's decision to enhance the visibility of intelligence on its staff, are indicators that the government bureaucracy, key officials and interests groups are mobilized to resist intelligence reform.

In addition to preparing intelligence reform recommendations, the commission must develop a campaign strategy to sell intelligence reform. This campaign strategy, at a minimum, must provide a historical perspective, a compelling rationale for the reform, and anticipate and prepare for stakeholder responses. Also, it must exploit the informal and formal processes in the interagency forum to thwart the forces against, and to build a constituency for reform. Furthermore, it needs key spokespersons to rally support for the reform in an environment where time is of the essence. Finally, the commission must take advantage of existing momentum for reform, arising out of the September 11 tragedy, before the public and the US government move on to what they deem as more pressing matters.

Historical Perspective

The National Security Act 1947 (NSA 1947), created the National Security Council (NSC), the Defense Department (DoD), the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the National Security Adviser, the Central Intelligence Agency, and an interagency framework, as well as other functions and organizations, to respond to perceived shortfalls in the development and implementation of U.S. security policy during World War II. This act was designed to improve coordination and cooperation between the major players, the President, Vice President, the State Department and the Defense Department. These players were designated statutory members of the NSC. The DCI was designated the principle foreign intelligence adviser to the NSC, while the CJCS was designated the principle military adviser.

NSA 1947 increased the prestige and power of organizations directly serving as statutory members on the NSC. Additionally, the Secretary of Defense was given full authority over the military services. However, due to military and FBI resistance, and civil liberty concerns, the DCI was not given full line authority over the national intelligence organizations and the intelligence budget. The military intelligence organizations and budget, after the 1949 CIA Act was passed, remained under SecDef control. Initially this was not a major problem, because both the SecDef and DCI were relatively weak positions, equal to each other in prestige, power and arguably influence. However, over time, this seemingly benign systemic flaw in NSA 1947, the Cold War, military growth, the growth of intelligence organizations, and Goldwater Nichols changed the power dynamics between the SecDef and the DCI. The SecDef position became a much more powerful and influential position compared to the DCI, whose power was further limited by Congress in the 1970s. This imbalance in power, and lack of budget authority, inhibited the ability of the DCI to do his job as originally conceived and increased the potential for friction between two key players on the National Security Council. Could this particular flaw

in the interagency forum be a factor in the perennial lament about intelligence failures in the national security arena?

NSA 1947, and Executive Order 12333 made the DCI the statutory head of the Intelligence Community, coordinator of intelligence and the principal adviser to the President and the NSC on national foreign intelligence. The responsibilities of the DCI, as stated in NSA 1947, have not been matched by the power to fulfill these responsibilities. As former DCI Richard Helms noted in 1969, although the DCI was theoretically responsible for 100% of U.S. intelligence activities, he controlled less than 15% of the intelligence community assets, whereas the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff controlled almost 85%. Until the signing of Presidential Directive 17 during the Carter Administration, the DCI had neither budgeting or day-to-day management authority over the IC.[3] Currently, the Defense Department controls roughly 90% of the intelligence budget while the DCI controls about 10%. The DCI has, on paper, complete control of the National Foreign Intelligence Program and its components, but this still has not allowed him to completely lead and manage the intelligence community.

In fact the DCI serves two masters, the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. Because of the power of the Defense Secretary over national intelligence assets and their budgets, the national intelligence community's primary mission has shifted primarily to support to military operations (SMO). This emphasis was underscored after complaints about intelligence support to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the early 1990s. The National Security Agency, National Imagery Mapping Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office have all become Combat Support Agencies with an emphasis on operational and tactical applications rather than the strategic or national applications.

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[3] Richelson, Jeffrey T. *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, Westview Press, 1999, pg 387

The Compelling Rationale

The basic question remains why does the Intelligence Community need reform? The Intelligence Community itself has become leery of reform efforts. No one ever stays satisfied with reorganization because it never seems to do the trick. If the object is to prevent intelligence failure, there is little reason to believe that the next reform will do much better than the previous one.[4] All of the reforms from, the 1970s to the present haven't really answered the basic question of "why".

The reorganizations to date were similar to what you would do to a corporation to achieve profit, save money or to achieve a particular type of behavior. For example, some of the reform initiatives wanted to get rid of duplication of collection and analysis, reduce the force structure in terms of people and collection tools, and rewire the organization chart as an inexpensive way to accomplish change. These efforts, for the most part, weakened the best features of intelligence, including competitive analysis, covert operations, HUMINT collection, and national and tactical collection capabilities. The reforms became the ends, rather than the means to achieve an end. No wonder there was so much resistance from the intelligence bureaucracy. The reforms did not strengthen them to do their missions, which remained essentially the same. The requirements for intelligence did not change, and in fact grew. The compelling rationale for reform lies in the type of effects you want to achieve after the reform is initiated. The reform should enhance the policy maker's ability to formulate and execute policy.

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4 Hoge, James F. Jr., Rose Gideon. *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and The New War*, Betts, Richard K. *Intelligence Test, The Limits of Prevention*, pg 145-161, Public Affairs, 2001

Although SMO is a legitimate endeavor, because the Defense Department is the largest consumer of intelligence products, policy drives military operations and not the other way around. What is the proper balance between support to policy and support to military operations? This is the conundrum. The answer lies in the basic nature and purpose of intelligence. The raison d'etre for intelligence is support to the policy maker. The premier policy maker is the President of the United States; everyone else, including the SecDef is a supporter or implementer of the President's policies. The premier policy making organization within the Executive Branch of Government is the National Security Council. Strategic intelligence is designed to provide officials with the "big picture" and long-range forecasts they need in order to plan for the future. Strategic intelligence has been part of the national security policy for almost as long as there have been nations.[5] Intelligence, like the military, is an instrument of national power at the disposal of the President of the United States. Currently, the military instrument controls the intelligence instrument of national power. Perhaps this factor, and its unintended consequences, account for the policy maker's frustration with intelligence.

The national security environment has changed drastically since the demise of the Soviet Union. Globalization and the blurring of domestic and foreign policy have produced more diverse target sets and complex problems that impact U.S. national security interests. The U.S. increasingly is relying on all of its tools or instruments of national policy to achieve its objectives…diplomatic, information, military, economic, intelligence and law enforcement. The U.S. military is at the pointy end of the spear, but not all national security situations require a military response. The Intelligence Community needs to be reshaped to respond to the new and

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[5] Berkowitz, Bruce D., Goodman, Allan E. *Strategic Intelligence for American National Security*, Princeton University Press, 1989, pg 4

emerging dynamics in the international environment. It must be able to quickly respond to a wide spectrum of warning problems and to provide timely and relevant intelligence across the spectrum of political operations to include military operations. The intelligence community needs the flexibility, organizational agility, and focused leadership to support diplomatic, economic and law enforcement operations, in addition to SMO. The terrorist event of September 11 only underscores the need for reform, to refocus on support to the policy maker.

The war on global terrorism is primarily an intelligence and law enforcement endeavor despite the current military operations in Afghanistan. The collection, acquisition, and analysis efforts need to be flexible, focused and synergistic to conduct this war. Covert operations need to be rebuilt, but in the near and midterm national technical collection means need to be fined tuned to focus on terrorism and other global issues of concern. This goal can be achieved with a new intelligence structure and leadership with both line and budget authority. In a nutshell, the compelling rationale for intelligence reform lies in the effects that need to be attained. The reform must enhance direct support to the President and improve his ability to use all of the instruments of national power.

Stakeholders

Who are the major stakeholders that would resist reform such reform of the intelligence community? The easiest ones to identify are the Defense Department and its elements (the National Security Agency, the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office) and Congress. The less obvious stakeholders are the media and civil libertarian groups. Some of their basic concerns will be a perceived or real loss of power, loss of influence, impact on support to military operations, and erosion of civil liberties. In Congress, historically, on this issue, some of the biggest challenges have occurred in the Senate. The

Senate Armed Services Committee and Intelligence Committee will strive to protect the interests of the military and intelligence communities respectively. Each of these committees in the Senate has a history of jealously guarding their turf. On the other hand, the House Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee usually work in concert on intelligence issues and should be easier to manage. Congressional concern will be to sustain support to military operations and minimize the impact of this reform on the budget.

In the public arena, the media will look for any flaws in reform, highlight the friction it's causing between government officials, and underscore public concerns that arise due to the strengthening of intelligence capabilities. A proactive media stance should alleviate some of these problems. The campaign strategy for reform must address all of the stakeholders' concerns and demonstrate how the reform will benefit our nation in the new national security environment, and the risks identified and mitigated. Stakeholders should be encouraged to submerge their interests for loftier goals that support the Presidents ability to formulate and implement policy.

Exploiting the Interagency Arena

Realistically oftentimes organizations and people do not care about altruistic goals and only care about their interest and the interest of their organization. It's going to take some footwork, and some good old fashion lobbying, to get buy-in for intelligence reform from the various stakeholders. Understanding the formal interagency wiring diagram and the process is key to ensuring you correctly identify the key power brokers, but power brokers are not necessarily the individuals at the top of the organization chart. Understanding the process and who controls the process is the key to successfully maneuvering and achieving goals in the interagency environment.

As in all facets of policymaking, knowledge, even of the procedural variety, is power.[6] The formal process is difficult to use for an actual commitment because support is on record and there is no cover or plausible deniability. However, the informal process is much easier means to build a constituency for intelligence reform. Handling issues at higher and higher levels is not always the better way. High profile and public issues are much more vulnerable to broader political dynamics and are often subject to trading and hostage taking.[7] The intelligence commission also may need to solicit support outside the immediate circle affected stakeholders, thereby building a constituency for reform. For example, the Department of Justice, State, Commerce and Treasury may find that intelligence reform will allow more dynamic support to them in the future. In Congress, support from individuals up for election in the next cycle might be useful. These congressional leaders may want to demonstrate to their constituents that they supported initiatives to improve homeland security. Media roundtables and background media interviews with the national and local press operatives can also be used to gain support from the media and the public. Be forewarned that lobbying will be a continuing effort to gain, shore up and sustain support from key figures in the government and the public arena.

Spokespersons

President Bush established the commission for intelligence reform four months prior to the September 11 terrorist incidents, a plus in political terms, because it lends more credibility to the

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6 Hersman, Rebecca, K.C. *Friends and Foes, How Congress and the President Really Make Foreign Policy,* Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pg 111

7 Hersman, Rebecca, K.C. *Friends and Foes, How Congress and the President Really Make Foreign Policy,* Brookings Institution Press, 2000, pg 111

initiative. Previous reforms were the result of a perceived crises and failure in intelligence warning. The President's initiative on intelligence demonstrates he's a strategic thinker and proactive problem solver. The commission should convince the President to be a key spokesperson and champion for the promulgation of intelligence reform. The President can use his regular media events, and presidential ceremonial activities, to endorse intelligence reform. His support could mitigate opposition within the Executive and Legislative Branches. The Vice President, the National Security Adviser, the Homeland Security Adviser and other members of the Executive Branch who regularly appear in the media should include messages supporting intelligence reform during their various engagements. Congressional leaders should also be considered as key spokespersons for the Bush Administration's efforts to reform intelligence. It may be worth reviewing the President's campaign strategy for tax cuts to understand the effective employment of spokespersons.

Timing is Key

The commission has a unique opportunity to introduce intelligence reform to actors in the interagency forum, the media, and the public before their focus shifts to the U.S. economy, the Enron debacle, and the elections this year. History has shown that Americans have a short attention span. The intelligence reform commission must leverage time. The President is due to give his State of the Union Speech in the next few weeks. This speech represents an opportunity to introduce intelligence reform as a part of the overall strategy against global terrorism and for homeland defense. The commission has an opportunity to deflate the brouhaha that will occur when hearings are held later this year to determine "who's to blame" for the perceived intelligence failure leading up to September 11.

Conclusion

In a political environment, what may appear to be difficult to do can prove to be a simple task, while a relatively simple task can prove difficult to do. The commission on intelligence reform certainly had a tough task examining the large and complex U.S. intelligence bureaucracy and proposing recommendations to reform that bureaucracy. But, that was the easy task compared to the next step they will have to take. The tougher task will be gaining the support to have intelligence reform implemented.

There have been many efforts to reform the intelligence community in the past. These reforms were either abandoned, or only partially implemented due to resistance from the intelligence bureaucracy, the Department of Defense, Congress, and other special interest groups in and out of government. Intelligence reform is necessary due to dynamics in the strategic environment and globalization. The commission must sell intelligence reform to affected stakeholders and build a constituency for reform in both the Executive and Legislative Branches of government, and with other interests groups. The commission must have a strategy to sell intelligence reform. This marketing strategy must include a compelling and convincing story for change. It must anticipate and prepare for resistance from major stakeholders. Additionally, the informal process within the interagency forum should be used to gain support from the key power brokers that can make this reform happen. The President must be convinced to use his platform to support this reform, as a part of his overall goal to improve his ability to make and implement policy for the global war on terrorism, homeland defense and the other myriad security problems in the new global environment. It is imperative for the commission to introduce its findings sooner rather than later before the government and the public shifts it's

focus to other matters. Finally the commission must take advantage of current public support for the war on terrorism, the President, and homeland security to move reform forward.

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